

CLAIMS

1. A machine based method comprising
searching a database for information about resources that may be used for
participation in projects, the database containing time periods during which each of the
resources is available and amounts of participation for which the resources can be used for
the projects,
the searching comprising matching proposed amounts of participation and proposed
time periods with the time periods and amounts stored in the database, and
identifying resources based on the matching.
2. The method of claim 1 in which the resources comprise people.
3. The method of claim 1 in which the time periods during which each of the resources
is available comprise availability.
4. The method of claim 1 in which the amounts of participation for which the resources
can be used comprise utilization.
5. The method of claim 1 in which the database also contains information about
qualifications of the resources for participation in the projects, and the searching also
comprises matching proposed qualifications with qualifications stored in the database.
6. The method of claim 1 also including a selection by a planner of resources to be used
for the projects, the selection being made from among the resources identified on the basis of
the matching.
7. The method of claim 6 also including communicating with resources about the
selection using a groupware program.
8. A machine-based method comprising
enabling a project planner to identify a person to participate in a project that has time
constraints on its completion, and
in response to the identifying of the person, scheduling assignments for the person
that are consistent with the time constraints of the project, the assignments being selectively
either tentative assignments or committed assignments.
9. The machine-based method of claim 8 in which the scheduled assignments comprise
assignments of specific time periods.

10. The machine-based method of claim 8 also including searching scheduled assignments to identify people available for assignment, the searching being arranged to treat people as unavailable at times when they are subject to scheduled fixed assignments.

11. The method of claim 10 in which the searching is also arranged to treat people as
5 unavailable at times when they are subject to scheduled tentative assignments.

12. The method of claim 10 in which scheduled assignments for a person may exceed 100% of the working time of the person.

13. The method of claim 12 in which the scheduled assignments may exceed 100% of the working time of the person.

10 14. A machine-based method comprising
maintaining a database of information about human resources of an enterprise including assignments of human resources to roles in projects being conducted by the enterprise, the database being managed by a workforce management application, and
when assignments of human resources to roles in projects are made or changed in a
15 project resource planning application that is distinct from the workforce management application, updating the human resources database to incorporate the information about the assignments.

15. The method of claim 14 in which the assignments comprise utilization and availability information with respect to the human resources of the enterprise.

20 16. The method of claim 14 also including receiving requests from users through the project resource planning application for information about availability and utilization of human resources, and based on the requests, automatically querying the human resources database.

25 17. The method of claim 14 also including making available, online to users within the enterprise, information about tasks of projects for which human resources have not been scheduled, and receiving requests to schedule the users for the tasks.

18. A machine-based method comprising
maintaining a common database of information about availability of resources of an enterprise for participation on projects of the enterprise,
30 enabling project planners to search the database for resources for possible assignment to projects and to assign resources to projects,

providing information about resources assigned to the projects from the common database to a groupware application to enable the groupware application to schedule the resources and alert the resources of the scheduling, and

providing updated information about scheduling of the resources from the groupware
5 back to the common database, and updating the common database based on the updated information.

19. The method of claim 18 in which enabling project planners to search the database includes receiving requests at an interface of a project resource planning application, and providing the requests to the common database of information.

10 20. The method of claim 18 in which the groupware application comprises Microsoft Outlook or Lotus Notes.

21. The method of claim 18 in which the assignments to projects are expressed as calendar tasks in the groupware application.

22. The method of claim 18 in which the resources comprise human resources.

15 23. The method of claim 18 in which the updated information about scheduling is entered by a user of the groupware application.

24. A machine-based method comprising
maintaining information about a project of an enterprise, the information including assignments of human resources to roles associated with the project, and
20 providing online reports of all roles and assignments of human resources to all roles for the project.

25. The method of claim 24 also including
accumulating information about assignments of human resources to roles associated with multiple projects, and

25 enabling a user to obtain online analyses of utilization and availability of human resources across the multiple projects.

26. A machine-based method comprising
receiving from a project planner, with respect to a project, identifications of project roles to be performed for a project, the project roles identifying attributes of human resources
30 useful for performing at least a portion of the project, without limiting the identification to specific human resources.

27. The method of claim 26 in which the attributes comprise qualifying attributes that define qualifications of suitable human resources.

28. The method of claim 26 in which the attributes comprise capacitive attributes that define time constraints on suitable human resources.

5 29. The method of claim 26 in which the attributes for the project roles are defined by the project planner in connection with planning the project.

30. The method of claim 26 in which the project roles are defined as generic project roles and the project planner selects the project roles for the project from the generic project roles.

31. The method of claim 30 also comprising associating tasks of the project with
10 respective ones of the identified project roles.

32. The method of claim 31 also including
enabling the project planner to identify specific human resources for at least some of the project roles in a manner that is independent of the identification of the project roles or the associating of tasks with roles.

15 33. The method of claim 26 also including
enabling the project planner to identify specific human resources for at least some of the project roles in a manner that is independent of the identification of the project roles.

34. A machine-based method comprising
presenting to a project planner a list of project roles needed for completing a project
20 of an enterprise, and

enabling the project planner to enabling a project planner to assign tasks of the project to respective ones of the project roles without necessarily having specific human resources identified for each of the project roles.

35. A machine-based method comprising
25 enabling a project manager to search a database for specific human resources that match defined attributes of project roles associated with a project of an enterprise.

36. The method of claim 35 in which the attributes comprise qualifying attributes that define qualifications of suitable human resources.

37. The method of claim 35 in which the attributes comprise capacitive attributes that
30 define time constraints on suitable human resources.

38. The method of claim 37 in which the capacitive attributes include availability or utilization.

39. The method of claim 35 also including enabling the project manager to identify the importance of respective attributes.

5 40. The method of claim 39 in which the importance can be identified as mandatory or optional for qualification purposes.

41. Apparatus comprising

a stored database containing information about resources that may be used for participation in projects, the database containing time periods during which each of the
10 resources is available and amounts of participation for which the resources can be used for the projects, and

an application that enables a project manager to search the stored database, to match proposed amounts of participation and proposed time periods with the time periods and amounts stored in the database, and to identify resources based on the matching.

15 42. Apparatus comprising

means for enabling a project planner to identify a person to participate in a project that has time constraints on its completion, and

means for scheduling, in response to the identifying of the person, assignments for the person that are consistent with the time constraints of the project, the assignments being
20 selectively either tentative assignments or committed assignments.

43. Apparatus comprising

a stored database of information about human resources of an enterprise including assignments of human resources to roles in projects being conducted by the enterprise, the database being managed by a workforce management application, and

25 a project resource planning application that is distinct from the workforce management application, that is configured to respond to assignments of human resources to roles in projects being made or changed, by updating the human resources database to incorporate the information about the assignments.

44. A medium bearing instructions to cause a machine to

30 maintain a common database of information about availability of resources of an enterprise for participation on projects of the enterprise,

enable project planners to search the database for resources for possible assignment to projects and to assign resources to projects,

provide information about resources assigned to the projects from the common database to a groupware application to enable the groupware application to schedule the resources and alert the resources of the scheduling, and

provide updated information about scheduling of the resources from the groupware back to the common database, and updating the common database based on the updated information.

45. A medium bearing instructions to cause a machine to

maintain information about a project of an enterprise, the information including assignments of human resources to roles associated with the project, and

provide online reports of all roles and assignments of human resources to all roles for the project.

46. A medium bearing instructions to cause a machine to

present to a project planner a list of project roles needed for completing a project of an enterprise, and

enable the project planner to enabling a project planner to assign tasks of the project to respective ones of the project roles without necessarily having specific human resources identified for each of the project roles.

47. A medium bearing instructions to cause a machine to enable a project manager to search a database for specific human resources that match defined attributes of project roles associated with a project of an enterprise.